

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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S E C R E T GUATEMALA 3465

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: XA, CU, UR, MPOL, GT
SUBJ: GUATEMALAN REACTION TO SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA

REF: STATE 148740

1. IT SEEMS SAFE TO CONCLUDE THAT THE LAUGERUD ADMINISTRATION, WHICH WILL LEAVE OFFICE IN TWO WEEKS, HAS GIVEN LITTLE SYSTEMATIC THOUGHT TO THE SOVIET/CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA. THE GOG'S TENDENCY TO VIEW AFRICA AS FAR AFIELD FROM GUATEMALAN INTERESTS, HOWEVER, IS TEMPERED BY A VISCERAL ANTI-COMMUNISM AND A CERTAIN DISMAY AT WHAT IS PERCEIVED AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE USG'S ABDICATION OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE POST-VIETNAM ERA. CUBAN RESOLVE AND SUCCESS NO DOUBT HAVE IMPRESSED THE GOG. AND WE HAVE LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE GOG ACCEPTS AT FACE VALUE THE CHARGES OF CUBAN/SOVIET INSTIGATION AND PREPARATION OF THE SHABA INVASION.

2. FOR THE GOG, THE CUBAN/SOVIET AFRICAN ADVENTURES MERELY CONFIRM THE PERFIDIOUS SINGLE-MINDEDNESS OF "WORLD COMMUNISM"

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AND THE FALLACY OF DETENTE. THEIR INTEREST, RATHER, IS FOCUSED ON THE US RESPONSE. IT SEEMS EVIDENT THAT THE GOG WOULD LOOK UPON MORE DIRECT US INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA AS A FAVORABLE SIGNAL, REINFORCING THEIR HOPE THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL MEET CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE HEMISPHERE WITH THE OLD-TIME RESOLVE.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA ADDRESSED THIS QUESTION OBLIQUELY WHEN, TALKING TO REPORTERS JUNE 6, HE ANTICIPATED THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD NOT PERMIT A CUBAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN BELIZE. "THE US INTEREST IS IN DIRECT RATIO TO DISTANCE," HE SAID, AND APPEARED TO TAKE COMFORT FROM THE FACT THAT IN THE SHABA EPISODE THE US CONTRIBUTED AIRLIFT CAPABILITY IF NOT TROOPS.

4. TO AN IMPORTANT EXTENT, WE SUSPECT THE GOG SEES THESE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENTS THROUGH THE OPTIC OF ITS BELIZE DISPUTE PREOCCUPATIONS AND THE WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT GUATEMALA IS HIGH ON THE LIST OF CUBAN TARGETS, IN REPRISAL FOR ITS HAVING FURNISHED A STAGING AREA FOR THE 1961 BAY OF PIGS INVASION. HOWEVER, IT HAS NOT OCCURRED TO ANYBODY HERE TO COMMENT, AT LEAST IN OUR HEARING, ON THE COMPELLING ANALOGIES BETWEEN THAT EPISODE AND THE CURRENT ONE INVOLVING CUBA, ANGOLA AND ZAIRE.

5. WE DOUBT THE GOG HAS GIVEN ANY THOUGHT TO THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE CUBAN/SOVIET ROLE IN AFRICA MAY BE A DIVISIVE ISSUE AMONG FELLOW LATIN GOVERNMENTS.

6. THE ABOVE OBSERVATIONS REFLECT OUR BEST JUDGMENT RATHER THAN ANY SPECIFIC CONSULTATION WITH THE CURRENT GOG. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE FORCES IN THE INCOMING ADMINISTRATION WHO HOLD OUT THE HOPE OF EVENTUAL NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH
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CUBA, INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE MUCH THE SAME INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK AS THE OLD.
ANDREWS

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